As school systems prepare for the 2020-2021 school year, planning should be grounded in addressing lost instructional time from an extended COVID-19 closure at the end of the 2019-2020 school year. Northwest Evaluation Association (NWEA) projections on COVID-19 academic achievement indicate "major academic impacts from COVID closures for students." This is particularly true in mathematics, in which students are likely to return in 2020-2021 with less than 50% of the learning gains from the previous year.[1] School systems should also be preparing for an academic year that consists of additional disruptions due to COVID-19, including the likelihood of further COVID-19 closures. School calendars are local decisions, and any changes would need to be thought through and authorized locally. That being said, as an option for local school systems, restructuring the 2020-2021 academic calendar is a key lever school systems can use to address both prior academic loss and the potential of future COVID-19 interruption.

This document outlines three options for 2020-2021 calendars along with additional considerations and FAQs. Information below should be used as guidance, and TEA will not require the implementation of any specific calendar. In order for a school system to determine if an intended calendar and associated impacts are appropriate for its situation, it is advised to first consult with its legal counsel regarding the intended calendar and associated impacts.

2020-2021 Calendar Options Guidance: Section Topics
Click on the section topics below to go directly to that section of the document.

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[1] https://www.nwea.org/content/uploads/2020/05/Collaborative-Brief_Covid19-Slide-APR20.pdf
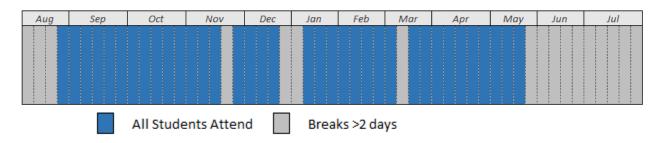
Calendar Options

TEA has outlined three calendar options below. School systems are not limited to these options and are encouraged to design a calendar that addresses COVID-19 slide while meeting their unique local needs.

1. **Traditional Calendar**
   School systems may elect to keep a traditional calendar for the 2020-2021 school year. This includes starting on or after the fourth Monday in August, holding traditional breaks over Thanksgiving, winter break, and spring break, and holding the last day of instruction at the end of May.
   Calendar Components: 75,600 minutes
   Funding: Normal

Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul

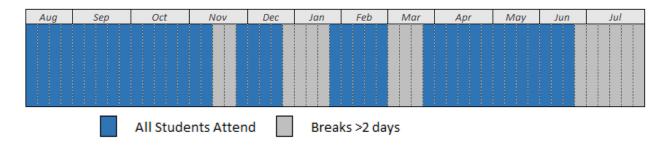■ All Students Attend   ☐ Breaks >2 days

2. **COVID-19 Response Calendar**
   A traditional calendar with COVID-19 breaks would start on the fourth Monday in August and build in time throughout the year or at the end of the school year as 'COVID-19 Make-Up Days'. In the event of a COVID-19 disruption, these pre-identified breaks would be repurposed in the same way bad weather make-up days would.
   Calendar Requirements: 75,600 minutes
   Funding: Normal

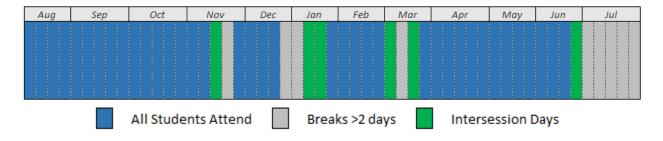| Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul

■ All Students Attend   ☐ Breaks >2 days

3. **Intersessional Calendar with ADSY**
   An intersessional calendar builds in intersessional blocks throughout the school year. During these intersessions, a targeted student population would attend for a specific purpose such as remediation. An intersessional calendar may start in early August, hold longer breaks surrounding the existing Thanksgiving, winter, and spring breaks, and extend the instructional calendar to the end of June. In addition to remediation, intersessional blocks could be used as whole-school instructional make-up days if or when COVID-19 interruptions occur. Elementary campuses would be able to utilize Additional Days School Year (ADSY) funding for intersessional blocks if the instructional calendar has 180 days overall.

Calendar Requirements: 75,600 minutes over 180 days (for ADSY campuses); up-to 30 intersessional days
Funding: Normal funding and half-day funding for ADSY days (PK-5)

Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul

■ All Students Attend ☐ Breaks >2 days ■ Intersession Days

Summary of Calendar Options
The table below illustrates the impact of each calendar option in five key areas.

	More Time for Learning	Flexibility w/ COVID Closures	Potential Added Costs	Potential Operational Changes	Added Funding
1. Traditional Calendar	No Impact	No Impact	No Impact	No Impact	No Impact
2. COVID-19 Response Calendar	No Impact	Benefit	Challenge	Challenge	No Impact
3. Intersessional Calendar with ADSY	Benefit	Benefit	Challenge	Challenge	Benefit

■ Benefit   ☐ No Impact   ■ Challenge

Guidance and Additional Considerations

Changing an academic calendar involves many inter-related actions. The guidance below includes some key considerations, including actions for changing the calendar and guidance on teacher contracts.

Actions for Determining a 2020-2021 Calendar

The actions below represent some key steps for school systems exploring changes to the 2020-2021 calendar.

1. **Establish 2020-2021 Calendar Committee**
2. **Identify Key District Constraints and Variables** *(examples below)*
   a. Ratio of students in a classroom at one time
   b. Classroom deficit based on student ratio
   c. Estimated student population unwilling/unable to attend in person
   d. Estimated teacher population unable to attend in person
   e. Flexibility of start date
3. **Draft Sample Calendars**
4. **Identify Potential Impact for each Sample Calendar** *(examples below)*

  a. Student learning impact
  b. District operations *(e.g., available technology, transportation)*
  c. Staff contract requirements
  d. Financial impact
  e. Extra/Co-Curricular impact *(e.g., enrichment, UIL)*
  f. Plan for COVID-19 closure/s
  g. Flexibility for associated option
  h. 2021-2022 school year impact

5. **Obtain Community Input**
6. **Hold Committee Vote to Finalize Calendar Recommendation**

Teacher Contracts

If a district chooses to operate school for longer than a 10-month period by starting earlier than planned and/or by ending school later than planned, do the district's teachers who have already signed contracts with that district for the school year now subject to adjustment have to work the days that exceed a 10-month period and, depending on the terms of the contracts at issue, the minimum 187 days of teacher service?

Districts should consult with their legal counsel to address these matters and associated contract-specific issues. That said, the answer depends on the terms of the teacher contracts, but, in most cases, a district can require its teachers to work the extra days if the district: 1) provides additional compensation under existing contracts that permit extended calendar/number of days worked flexibility to the teachers for the extra time required to complete the adjusted school year; and 2) extends by agreement the existing teacher contracts to address the extra time and any associated compensation.

In instances where the existing contracts cannot be amended by agreement, a district can enter into short-term contracts with additional teachers not currently under contract to address the extra time and any associated compensation.

When addressing adjustments to school calendars and consequent teacher contract issues, districts should take into consideration Commissioner precedent that teachers cannot be paid less than they were paid in a prior year without being permitted to withdraw from their contracts. See *Kelley v. N. E. Indep. Sch. Dist.*, Docket No. 026-R10-1101 (Comm'r Educ. 2006); *N. E. Indep. Sch. Dist. v. Kelley*, 2010 Tex. App. LEXIS 9792 (Tex. App.--Austin, 2010, pet. denied).

Additional Resources

TEA Resources

- Changing School Start Date Guidance (PDF)
- Adjusting 2020-2021 School Calendars (PPT)
- Intersessional Calendar Options (PDF)
- 2020-2021 Calendar Workbook (Excel)

- [HB 3 in 30: Additional Days School Year](#) (Recorded Webinar)
- [Additional Days School Year FAQ](#) (PDF)

Examples

- [TEA – 2020-2021 Intersessional Calendar with ADSY](#) (PDF)
- [TEA – 2020-2021 COVID Response Calendar](#) (PDF)
- [Clint ISD – 2020-2021 Calendar PK-5](#) (PDF)
- [Clint ISD – 2020-2021 Calendar 6-12](#) (PDF)
- [Socorro ISD – 2020-2021 Calendar](#) (PDF)
- [Coolidge ISD – 2020-2021 Calendar](#) (PDF)

Frequently Asked Questions

Process Questions

1.   Does a district have to be a District of Innovation (DOI) to implement a year-round calendar?

No, a district can choose to be a year-round school without being designated as a District of Innovation. See TEA's "[Changing School Start Date Guidance](#)" document for more guidance on school start date options.

2.   How does the intersessional calendar apply to the mandatory 4th Monday in August start date for districts that aren't districts of innovation? Will there be a waiver?

If a district elects to be a year-round school, then there is an exception in Texas Education Code (TEC), §25.0811(a)(1). See TEA's "[Changing School Start Date Guidance](#)" document for more guidance on school start date options.

3.   We are NOT a year-round designation school but are a District of Innovation. We currently start earlier by 2 weeks. If we plan an intersessional calendar, do we need to get a year-round Designation?

No, a year-round system designation is not required to operate a calendar that starts two weeks earlier than fourth Monday in August if your innovation plan accounts for a start date exemption.

Note: some school systems have adopted a DOI plan that exempts the 4th Monday in August, but imposes another date. If that is the case, and you wish to start earlier than that date, you may need adopt an update to your DOI plan. See TEA's "[Changing School Start Date Guidance](#)" document for more guidance on school start date options.

4.   What processes would we need to follow to bring a new calendar for board approval?

A district would follow the same process that it has used in the past. If making a change to the 2020-2021 school year, a district may accelerate the process to get the necessary community input.

5.   How would an intersessional calendar work with the current testing calendar?

The agency is considering options to provide testing window flexibility and will announce that flexibility soon.

Funding

1.   How are schools funded on a year-round calendar?

A school operating on a year-round calendar is funded the same as a district with a traditional calendar, based on 75,600 total minutes. Campuses implementing Additional Days School Year (ADSY) would receive half-day funding for each additional day after 180, up to 210 total, for grades PK-5. See the "Additional Days School Year FAQ" document for more information on ADSY.

2.   How will waivers for missed instructional days from COVID-19 work in the 2020-2021 school year?

TEA is currently finalizing guidance on attendance and waivers for the 2020-2021 school year and will announce that guidance soon.

Other

1.   How can a district address childcare with an intersessional calendar?

Districts are encouraged to explore local options for childcare and identify organizations as potential partners.

2.   Will UIL adjust its requirements and schedule for districts implementing an intersessional calendar?

UIL has worked with districts that have intersessional calendars in the past. UIL will continue to work with districts to adjust the calendar and rules as needed, depending on the number of districts that make this shift.

3.   How will these calendar modifications align with dual credit courses? Will TEA be contacting institutions of higher education (IHEs) to encourage cooperation?

School systems should work with their IHE partners to discuss how dual credit can best be provided to students.

4.   How does this impact CTE contact hours?

CTE contact hours are based on the average number of minutes a student spends in CTE courses each day, so calendar type should not affect CTE contact hours.

5.   Does the charter school provision for year-round also apply to TEC, Chapter 12, Subchapter C, charter schools?

Calendar requirements for charter schools formed under Subchapter C (district-authorized charters) will vary depending on the contract between the charter school and the district. Subchapter C charter schools should verify requirements and flexibility with their authorizing district.