

2017-2018 School Calendar

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) (Revised 6/12/2017)

1. Why can't we start school earlier in August?

State law requires that public schools begin the school year no earlier than the fourth Monday in August. In 2017, the fourth Monday is August 28th.

2. When does the first semester end? Though the holidays and breaks are the same, there are two separate grading cycles for elementary and secondary student. Elementary students will end their fall semester on January 19, 2018. Secondary students will end their fall semester prior to the Christmas holidays – December 21, 2017. This accommodation allows students in Grades 6-12 to take semester exams prior to our winter break. Survey feedback from parents, staff, and secondary students indicated this preference.

3. Why does the first semester (for secondary students) have fewer days than the second semester? Because of the late start date and ending the first semester prior to Winter Break, there are fewer days in the first semester than the second. Many of the additional days in the second semester will be used for state testing and other requirements.

4. Why is the Winter Break close to December 25th? Winter Break starts on December 22nd so that secondary students can have four additional days of instruction in the first semester. This allows 76 instructional days for students. If we started winter break a week earlier, there would only be 72 days in the first semester. Secondary staff, students, and families have consistently shared through survey data that the first semester needs to finish prior to the Winter Break so that semester exams are completed before the two week break. We felt that the additional four days of instruction in the first semester and avoiding the return to school the day after New Year's was in the best interest of students and staff.

5. January 15 – Why is this a professional exchange day for teachers and a school holiday for students? This is Martin Luther King Day and we have traditionally designated this as a holiday for students and allowed teachers to use professional development exchange time instead of coming in to work.

6. Why is the first week of in-service for staff listed as IS when we have PD (professional development) most of that week? The calendar legend includes the designation of PD as a professional waiver day that counts toward instructional minutes for students. The IS designation for in-service does not count toward instructional minutes for students. The calendar is set up this way in order to be clear to TEA in regard to how we are using those days.

7. How many in-service days do teachers need at the beginning of year? Teachers must work 187 days per their contract. If teachers do not come to work on these days prior to the start of school, they will have to come to work after school is out in order to meet the required number of contract days. The district does have discretion to determine how the days are used.

8. What about bad weather make-up days? The Texas Education Agency requires school calendars to include two bad weather make-up days. Both make-up days have been placed at the end of

the school year. The state also requires districts to schedule 75,600 instructional minutes for students during the school year. Because our students attend school for seven and a half hours a day, we will accumulate extra minutes. The extra minutes above the minimum of 75,600 instructional minutes may be used if we have to dismiss school early or miss a whole day due to weather. If, at the end of the year, we have met the minimum number of minutes of instruction, we will not have to use the bad weather days. If the bad weather days are not used, the district will move the last in-service day for teachers to Friday, June 1st.

9. **How can I find state testing dates for my child?** State testing dates (STAAR) can be found by grade/subject level on the Texas Education Agency's website:
<http://www.tea.state.tx.us/student.asssment/calendars/>

10. **When is Graduation for the WHS Class of 2018?** Graduation for Weatherford High School will be held at the Fort Worth Convention Center at 7:00pm on **Monday, June 4, 2018**. **This date was changed from June 2nd due to the Fort Worth Convention Center booking a convention for the same weekend. Conventions and conferences take precedence over graduations. The Fort Worth Convention Center is the only venue within the area that can seat the number of guests that normally attend graduation.**

11. **What is the difference between a "school waiver day" and an "exchange day?"**
"School waiver day" refers to the days that our teachers work on specific curriculum and the state allows those minutes to count towards the 75,600 instructional minutes for students.
"Exchange day" refers to a day that our teachers do not have to be on campus if they have completed 6 hours of professional development and filed that with the campus. If the teacher has not filed documentation with the campus, then they must report to the campus for a normal professional development day. There are three "exchange" days during the 2017-2018 school year. A teacher would need to accrue 18 hours of professional development during the summer or outside the normal school day in order to exchange all three days. Students do not report to school on these days.

If you have additional questions, please call the Student Services Office—817-598-2803