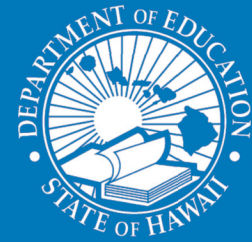


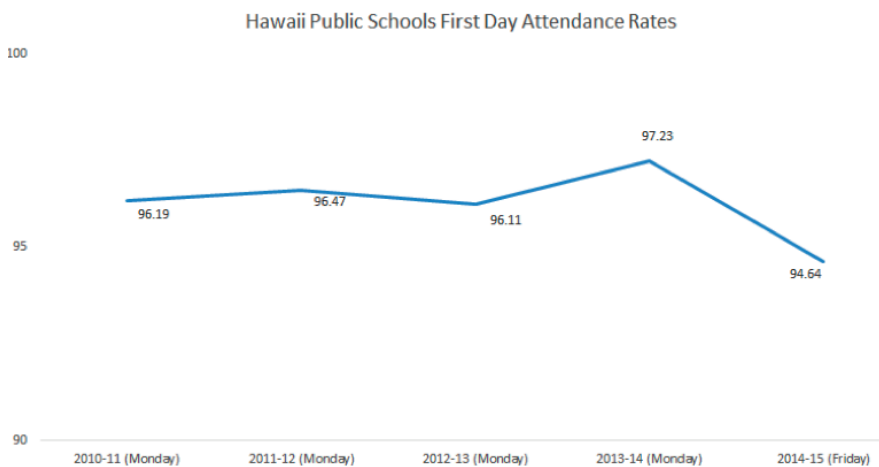
School Calendar



Each year the Department works to design a school calendar that results in the best possible learning environment for teaching and learning. The calendar for School Year 2015-16 has two key changes from SY2014-15:

1. Instead of starting school for students on a Friday, students will start on a Monday (August 3).

Why? It makes a difference whether or not kids show up at school. Attendance data from the past four years show that 5,000 additional students were absent on the first day of school, when the first day for students was a Friday instead of a Monday. With the most recent collective bargaining agreement, the first four days of the school year are teacher-only days. In SY2014-15, this meant starting school for teachers on a Monday and starting school for students on a Friday. For students and families, this was a disjointed start to the school year. The first student day was more likely to not be treated as a serious instructional day, as is represented in the data.



2. A two-week winter break instead of a three-week winter break; resulting in an earlier last day of school for students (Wednesday, May 25) and teachers (Thursday, May 26).

Why? By returning to a two-week winter break, the Department is refocusing the school calendar to support student learning and effective instruction. Research shows time and again that all students experience learning loss when they are not engaged in educational activities over time. Even a short amount of time away from school has an impact on students' ability to get back on track when school starts again. Teachers have to reemphasize classroom routines and practices, and students have to readjust to being in the classroom. This is particularly true for students in low-income families and communities who may not have access to as many structured learning opportunities outside of school.

In addition to addressing learning loss, a two-week winter break allows the Department to end the school year before Memorial Day instead of expecting students to return for one day of school on the Tuesday after the three-day weekend. For teachers, this means ending the school year on the Thursday before Memorial Day, instead of expecting them to return for two days after the three-day weekend. The last couple weeks of school tend to show a decline in student attendance. However, by not requiring students to attend school for one day after a three-day weekend, we hope to reduce absenteeism on the final day.

FAQs

Q. Why do we have a two-week winter break instead of a three-week winter break?

A. By returning to a two-week winter break, the Department is refocusing the school calendar to support student learning and effective instruction. Research from as long ago as 1906 shows that all students experience learning loss when they are not engaged in educational activities over time. Even a short amount of time away from school has an impact on students' ability to get back on track when school starts again. Teachers have to reemphasize classroom routines and practices and students have to readjust to being in the classroom.

Q. If winter break is only two weeks long, does this mean the second half of the school year is one week longer?

A. No. The school year will end earlier – the week before Memorial Day.

Q. Why can't we just start school in late August or September, like the Mainland does?

A. The start date for the school year impacts more than when students come to school – teacher paychecks and the paychecks for other 10-month employees are impacted. Transitioning to a later date has to happen over several years, so that employees' pay is not interrupted. In Spring 2014, Supt. Kathryn Matayoshi convened a workgroup of school staff, HSTA, HGEA, and state office staff to begin planning for a new school calendar that could:

- Begin school at a later date;
- Address challenges associated with school days during the hottest times of the year;
- Impact of natural disasters on school days;
- Ensure a financially sound transition;
- Maintain compliance with Hawaii State laws on instructional time; and
- Maintain compliance with the requirements in the collective bargaining agreements.

More information from the task force is expected in the next year.