

# **DEER PARK ISD 2016-17 CALENDAR DRAFT FAQ**

## **Why did the calendar adoption process taking longer this year?**

For many years, students in Texas public schools have been required to have instruction for 180 days each school year. Last year, the Texas Legislature passed a new law that changed how instructional time is measured from days to minutes. Under the new law, students must receive at least 75,600 minutes of instruction per school year.

## **Why is this change in the law important to Deer Park schools?**

DPISD and many other districts are interested in this new law because it offers greater local control over the school calendar, which is something that has been limited for many years. Now, because instructional time is measured in minutes, districts have the option of adding a few minutes to each day, which would mean the required amount of 75,600 would be reached sooner. This would result in the school year ending sooner for students.

## **How will DPISD implement the new law?**

The District added 15 minutes to the end of each school day for all schools except the Early Childhood Center, which will have 7.5 minutes added to each half-day session in the morning and afternoon. By adding just 15 minutes to each day, the District can finish the school year for students before Memorial Day and have a student holiday/staff inservice day on the first Monday after New Year's Day.

## **Why is this change being made?**

Under the previous calendar rules established by the state, many districts like Deer Park had to extend the school year into the first week in June in order to meet the required number of instructional days. Over the years, parents have often contacted the District to share concerns and frustrations about the school year ending in June. Ending the school year before Memorial Day will give families an extra week to make summer plans. For older students who work a summer job, it will give them an additional week of income.

## **Are there other benefits to adding minutes to the student schedule?**

From an instructional standpoint, there are several benefits. Adding minutes to each school day to end the school year earlier would result in more meaningful instruction taking place prior to state assessment testing in the late spring. Ending the school year earlier for students would also give teachers and administrators an extra week of planning to focus on students who need remediation during the summer. The change also provides extra time for employee training.

**When will the 2016-17 school year end for students?**

The approved student calendar has the last day of instruction taking place on Friday, May 26, 2017.

**What will the new daily schedule be for students?**

Early Childhood Center – To be announced

Elementary Schools – 7:45 a.m.-3 p.m.

Junior High Schools – 8:15 a.m.-3:30 p.m.

High Schools – 8:45 a.m.-4 p.m.

**When will the 2016-17 school year end for employees?**

The change in the law does not affect the number of days that teachers must work, so even though the school year will be shorter for students, it will be the same for teachers. Because the school calendar is driven by instruction, the number of work days for other employees will be the same as the teacher work calendar. Employees will work the week after Memorial Day, participating in training, completing District, state, and federal records, entering grades, and preparing for the summer.

**Will teachers have to work longer each day?**

No. Teachers already remain at work after students are dismissed, so the added student time will not affect the length of the teacher work day.

**How will the new schedule affect other, non-teaching employees?**

There are a number of hourly employees who will be affected by the change, but each case will be different. Supervisors will contact them to share the details of how the new calendar will impact them.

**Are there any other changes to the 2016-17 calendar?**

In order to get an additional full day of instructional minutes, the half-day early dismissal days on the last instructional day of each semester have been changed to full days. Graduation will take place on Friday, May 26, 2017. The staff inservice day that has been traditionally scheduled on the last Friday of the school year has been moved to Aug. 12, 2016.

**Who had input on the calendar?**

When developing the calendar, DPISD works closely with the Parent Teacher Organization Roundtable and the Educational Improvement Council, both of which include representatives from every school in the District. The administration creates a series of calendar drafts based on the previous year's calendar and on instructional needs. These drafts are shared with the

PTO Roundtable and the EIC. This is an excellent way to get feedback from parents, employees, and community representatives. Once a final draft is created and is approved by these groups, it is referred to the Board of Trustees for final approval.

**Are other Districts adding minutes to their student calendars?**

Yes, many districts in our area and across the state are making similar changes to their calendars.

**When was the calendar approved?**

The Board of Trustees approved the calendar on Monday, Feb. 15.

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