

School Year Calendar Frequently Asked Questions

Q: Why is District 225 considering a change to the school year calendar?

A: During the last few years, the District has been engaged in initiatives targeting student wellness. As a result, possible changes to various aspects of the school year calendar are being considered in an effort to improve overall benefits for students and staff. The most significant change being considered is to start the school year calendar earlier in August to allow for semester final exams and the completion of the first semester prior to the winter break. Common reasons to consider an earlier start to the school year calendar include the following:

- There may be a positive overall benefit on student wellness by allowing students to experience a true break free from homework, project completion and test preparation during the winter break.
- Bringing academic activities to closure across all disciplines prior to winter break and restarting to finish the first semester activities and course content after winter break would be eliminated.
- It would place District 225 in sync with the majority of other high school districts in the area.

For many years, students and parents have raised questions regarding the school calendar such as “Why don’t you offer final exams before winter break?” or “Have you ever considered ending the first semester before winter break?”. Recently, a significant number of high school districts in the area have changed their school calendars to an earlier start time in August to allow for final exams and the first semester to be completed prior to the winter break.

Q: Have other area high schools made a change to start earlier in August?

A: Yes. In recent years, a significant number of high school districts in the area have changed their school calendars to an earlier start time in August to allow for final exams and the first semester to be completed prior to the winter break. The following high school districts now have an earlier start date with the completion of the first semester prior to winter break:

District 125 (Stevenson)

District 128 (Libertyville / Vernon Hills)

District 207 (Maine)

District 211 (Palatine)

District 214 (Arlington Heights)

District 219 (Niles)

District 220 (Barrington)

District 113 (Highland Park / Deerfield) recently adopted a school year calendar that allows semester final exams to be administered prior to the winter break with the end of the first semester following the winter break.

District 202 (Evanston) and District 115 (Lake Forest) have adopted calendars for 2019-2020 that have earlier start dates in August with the completion of semester final exams and the first semester prior to the winter break.

District 203 (New Trier) is currently considering an earlier start to the school year calendar with the completion of semester final exams and the first semester prior to the winter break. That decision will not be advertised until later this fall.

Q: How has the school year calendar been determined in previous years?

A: The district administration develops several drafts of school year calendars for consideration that are based on the [School Calendar Preparation Guidelines](#) posted on the District 225 website. The school year calendar drafts are then shared with building administrators and the leadership of the unions for input. At the same time, the school calendar drafts are shared with the elementary feeder district superintendents to gather their input on the impact of the school year calendar drafts on their respective school communities. Acceptable drafts of the school year calendar are then presented to the Board of Education along with a recommendation from the District Administration. Following discussion and possible revision, the Board of Education normally adopts a school year calendar for the year following the coming school year in late April or early May. The 2018-2019 school year calendar was adopted in the spring of 2017.

Q: What is the earliest that the school year calendar has started in previous years?

A: In reviewing the last 10 years of calendars for District 225, the earliest start date in August was August 21, which occurred during the 2013-2014 school year.

Q: Has the District ever considered starting the school year calendar after Labor Day?

A: It has been many years since the adopted District 225 school year calendar contained a start date after Labor Day.

Q: If the school year calendar changes, will the athletic calendar change as well?

A: No. The athletic calendar followed by high schools in Illinois is established by the Illinois High School Association (IHSA) in conjunction with the athletic calendar established by the National Federation of State High School Associations. (NFHS). As stated in the IHSA By-laws, the athletic calendar begins in July with the first full week (Sunday thru Saturday) in July being established as Week One. The sports of football and boys and girls golf are allowed to start on Monday of Week Six. All other fall sports are allowed to start on Wednesday of Week Six. The earliest start date for fall sports in future years are the following:

2018 - August 6; 2019 - August 12; 2020 - August 10; 2021 - August 9; 2022 - August 8; 2023 - August 7

Q: Is there any impact to the athletic and activities calendars due to the movement of other high school districts to an earlier start date in August?

A: It is common practice for area high school districts to suspend athletic and academic interscholastic competitions during the week of semester final exams. There will be a small impact, primarily during the week prior to winter break.

Q: How many students are involved in fall sports and other activities prior to the start of school in August?

A: According to participation statistics for both high schools, approximately 29% of the Glenbrook High School student population are involved in fall sports, marching band, cheerleading and poms, and begin participating in their sport or activity in early August prior to the start of the school year.

Q: What is the impact of the District 225 school year calendar on the feeder elementary districts?

A: Although each elementary school district adopts its own school year calendar, the District 225 school year calendar has served as the base calendar for many years. Each elementary district school calendar has its own nuances based on that school community, including the number of days that students are in attendance. In general, although each elementary school district determines the start and end dates for their school year calendar, the elementary school districts that feed into District 225 have attempted to set a school year calendar that is similar to the District 225 school year calendar to keep families together as much as possible.

Q: What is the potential impact on the feeder elementary districts if District 225 adopts a school year calendar with an earlier start time in August?

A: Based on feedback received from the elementary district superintendents, the primary concern expressed on behalf of their school communities is that an earlier start in August may negatively impact vacation plans for families which could result in reduced attendance levels at the start of the school year.

Q: What will be the potential impact on other community entities if District 225 adopts a school year calendar with an earlier start time in August?

A: There are a variety of community entities that will be affected by a change to an earlier start date in August. Primarily, these are entities that provide services to elementary and high school students during the summer months including the park districts, libraries, and a variety of private camps. If a decision is made to transition to a school year calendar with an earlier start date, it is important that the change be advertised as early as possible to allow the community entities affected to adjust their scheduling.

Q: How will vacation breaks in the school year calendar be affected by an earlier start date in August?

A: The current vacation breaks in the school year calendar are based largely on federal, state, and important religious observances. There will be no change in the scheduling of winter break or spring break. Some consideration will need to be given each year to holidays such as Columbus Day, Veterans Day, Martin Luther King Day, and Presidents Day, which are considered optional for student attendance. Each calendar year is different and presents its own challenges as to whether school should be conducted on those days.

Q: Will an earlier start date in August result in an earlier date for graduation ceremonies?

A: Not necessarily. District 225 graduation ceremonies have been conducted on the first Sunday after Memorial Day for many years. That date can be easily maintained. Moving to an earlier graduation date is highly dependent on the availability of an acceptable graduation venue for Glenbrook South High School due to the size of the senior class.

Q: Will school events and activities normally held during the week prior to the Winter Break be affected by an earlier start date in August?

A: Yes. If an earlier start date in August is adopted, the week prior to winter break would be used for the administration of first semester final exams and the end of the first semester. Regardless of the change to an earlier start date in August, there may be some changes to activities allowed by the schools during the week prior to winter break in an effort to allow students to engage more fully in academic activities and complete assignments..