

Olympia School District Balanced Calendar Exploratory Committee Research and Resources October 5, 2022

Introduction

The Olympia School District (OSD) has convened a community committee, the Balanced Calendar Exploratory Committee (BCEC) to look at the pros and cons of a balanced calendar.

A balanced calendar would modify the traditional 180-day school calendar to keep the learning process more continuous. Instead of a calendar dominated by a very long summer break, students would have more periodic, longer breaks throughout the school year and a shorter summer break. Students attending schools that follow a balanced calendar receive the same number of instructional days and hours as those who attend schools that follow a traditional calendar.

The term modified calendar is also used to refer to a balanced calendar.

This paper presents a collection of research and resources for potential use by the BCEC and other interested parties. Resources are organized in the following categories: Academic Impact, Research on Related Topics, District Process and Examples; Washington State Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI).

Academic Impact

Research on the effects of a balanced calendar on student achievement is sparse; more is available on the topic of summer learning loss. The following represents some of the research available, but is not meant to be a conclusive list.

On the OSD website:

https://www.osd.wednet.edu/our_district/board_of_directors/board_advisory_committees/balanced_calendar/research

- [Making the most of summer school -- a meta-analytic and narrative review](#) (Cooper, Charlton, Valentine & Muhlenbrock, 2000)
- [Summer Learning Loss: The Problem and Some Solutions](#) (Cooper, Harris, 2003)
- [Visible Learning](#) (Hattie, 2009)
- [Slowing the Summer Slide](#) (Smith 2012)
- [Lasting Consequences of the Summer Learning Gap](#) (Alexander, Entwisle and Olson, 2001, 2006)
- [Using a Balanced School Year to Improve Student Achievement. A White Paper of the Stark Education Partnership](#)
- [A Reset for Assessment: Toward a Less Burdensome Accountability System](#) (Buckley, Jack, 2021)
- [A Blueprint for Scaling Tutoring Across Public Schools, EdWorkingPaper No. 20-335](#) (Kraft, Matthew A.; Falken, Grace T.)
- [Invest in Teachers First: A Call to Action for Teacher-Focused Investments of Federal Relief Funds](#) (Center on Great Teachers and Leaders)
- [Agrarian roots? Think again. Debunking the myth of summer vacation's origins](#) (PBS; Saskia de Melker and Sam Weber)

North Thurston Public Schools

<https://www.nthurston.k12.wa.us/cms/lib/WA01001371/Centricity/Domain/4438/WSSDAPresentationSlides.pdf>

- WSSDA Presentation Slides from 12/16/21 presentation to the Balanced Calendar Initiative, includes research summaries and a close look at stats from Schoolfield Elementary compared to the rest of the district in Danville, VA.

Winlock School District

<https://www.winlockschools.org/page/modifiedcalendar>

- Impact of Summer Recess on Mathematics Learning Retention (Hornak, 2015) https://core-docs.s3.amazonaws.com/documents/asset/uploaded_file/1209/WSD/2235905/Hornak-Dissertation-May_2015-.pdf
- Five Insights on the 10th Anniversary of John Hattie's Visible Learning Research <https://aplusala.org/best-practices-center/2019/02/14/five-insights-on-the-10th-anniversary-of-john-hatties-visible-learning-research/>

Knox County Schools, TN, <https://www.knoxschools.org/domain/4273> research summary:

<https://www.knoxschools.org/cms/lib/TN01917079/Centricity/Domain/4273/full%20lit%20review.final.pdf>

Louisiana Dept of Education, Balanced School Calendar: Key Considerations for Implementation – includes some research summary, options for calendar structure

[https://www.louisianabelieves.com/docs/default-source/district-support/staffing-and-scheduling-\(balanced-calendar\).pdf?sfvrsn=40506418_2](https://www.louisianabelieves.com/docs/default-source/district-support/staffing-and-scheduling-(balanced-calendar).pdf?sfvrsn=40506418_2)

Other Resources

- Pros & Cons of Modifying the School Calendar, Seattle PI article (date?) <https://education.seattlepi.com/pros-cons-modifying-school-calendars-2540.html>
- The Effects of Modified School Calendars on Student Achievement and on School and Community Attitudes https://cdn5-ss13.sharpschool.com/UserFiles/Servers/Server_81788/File/Calendars/Board%20Approved%20Calendars/Effects%20of%20Modified%20Calendars%20article.pdf

Research on Related Topics

- Sustaining a Balanced Calendar in Hopewell City Public Schools, (Baber, Petrosky, Snow, Walton, 2021) https://scholarscompass.vcu.edu/edd_capstone/9/
- Designing an Evaluation Plan for Hopewell City Public Schools Balanced Calendar (Blosser, Burnett, Elmore, Smith, Zahner, 2022)

District Process and Examples

Winlock School District, Washington

<https://www.winlockschools.org/page/modifiedcalendar>

- Announcement article <https://www.chronline.com/stories/winlock-school-district-adopts-modified-calendar-for-next-three-school-years,297232>

Hopewell City Public Schools, Virginia

https://www.hopewell.k12.va.us/apps/pages/index.jsp?uREC_ID=1734816&type=d&pREC_ID=1911303

Washoe Schools, NV (2022-23 balanced calendar)

https://www.washoeschools.net/cms/lib/NV01912265/Centricity/Domain/449/2022-2023_Balanced_Calendar.pdf

Louisiana Dept of Education, Balanced School Calendar: Key Considerations for Implementation – includes some research summary, **options for calendar structure**

[https://www.louisianabelieves.com/docs/default-source/district-support/staffing-and-scheduling-\(balanced-calendar\).pdf?sfvrsn=40506418_2](https://www.louisianabelieves.com/docs/default-source/district-support/staffing-and-scheduling-(balanced-calendar).pdf?sfvrsn=40506418_2)

Michigan Dept of Education: <https://www.michigan.gov/mde/services/flexible-learning/balanced-calendar>, includes some sample calendars

Calgary Board of Education – list of schools using modified calendar

<https://cbe.ab.ca/registration/calendars/Pages/modified-calendar.aspx>

OSPI

Q&A <https://www.k12.wa.us/sites/default/files/public/communications/2022docs/Balanced-Calendar-QA.pdf>

Includes questions about those with disabilities, childcare considerations, etc.

Grantees

To date, grant funding has been awarded to the following school districts across Washington to look at balanced calendar considerations:

- Asotin-Anatone School District
- Benge School District
- Bremerton School District
- Candy Mountain Academy
- Cashmere School District
- Chewelah School District
- Chimacum School District
- Columbia School District (Walla Walla)
- Crescent School District
- Elma School District
- Finley School District
- Freeman School District
- Goldendale School District
- Highland School District
- Kiona-Benton School District
- Kahlotus School District
- Kittitas School District
- Lopez Island School District
- Mossyrock School District
- Mount Adams School District
- Mount Vernon School District
- North Mason School District
- North Thurston School District
- Oakville School District
- Olympia School District
- Paterson School District
- Pomeroy School District
- Port Angeles School District
- Port Townsend School District
- Prescott School District
- Rainier Valley Leadership Academy
- Roosevelt School District
- Selah School District
- Soap Lake School District
- Skykomish School District
- Thorp School District
- Toledo School District
- Toppenish School District
- Touchet School District
- Union Gap School District
- Vancouver School District (balanced calendar on the website is password protected; they only show an announcement about looking at it)
- Wahluke School District
- Waitsburg School District
- Winlock School District
- Yakima School District

<https://www.ysd7.org/modifiedcalendar>
They have some presentations, no links to research)

Background & Resources

OSPI is partnering with several K–12 statewide organizations to support local education agencies interested in exploring modifying their school year calendars. The [Association of Educational Service Districts \(AESD Network\)\(link is external\)](#), a key partner, provides hands-on support and technical assistance to grantee districts to support networking and learning together across school district and regional boundaries.

Other partners include the

- Association of Washington School Principals (I did not find research on their website – maybe we could call?)
- Washington Association of School Administrators (I did not find research)
- Washington State School Directors' Association (no search – maybe you need to sign in)
- Washington Education Association (I did not find research)