

2017-2018 Calendar Talking Points

- Calendar Committee, comprised of School Board members, parents, central office and school administrators, and teachers, met five times over a two-month period to develop next year's school calendar.
- School Board members, parents, and school administrators surveyed their respective constituencies (both online and in person).
- Contradictory themes emerged: desire to minimize loss of instructional time while also expanding opportunities for regular collaboration within and across the schools to improve curriculum alignment and implement proficiency-based education.
- Analysis revealed that without PD built into calendar, individual teachers were having to be released to engage in important work on behalf of students (e.g., writing prompt scoring) -- at Pond Cove, sometimes as much as nine days.
- The Committee determined that releasing students one hour early on 1-2 Wednesdays per month (in lieu of two inservice days district-wide and five additional half-days at Pond Cove) would meet the teachers' need for regular collaboration while minimizing loss of instructional time for students. The hour early release represented a compromise between those teachers, primarily in the lower grades, who don't have any time for PD during the school day and those, primarily at the high school, who have common planning time and are concerned about incursions into their time with students. The latter did acknowledge, however, the collaboration across the school would be difficult to arrange if students weren't released at all, given variations in school dismissal times.
- There was robust conversation around parent-teacher conferences: when to schedule them, how much time was required, whether and how to allow for differences in each school, etc. In the end, the fall conference schedule (a half-day early release followed by a full day) was unchanged; however, it was moved to the day before Election Day and Election Day to honor the town's preference that school not be held on Election Day. Similarly, the spring conference schedule (a half-day early release) was retained with the understanding that the middle and high schools may choose to keep students in school and offer opportunities for conferencing at another time.
- The teacher day at the end of the school year is based on the 183-day teacher contract.