

TCSS Academic Calendar Survey Results Summary 2024-2025

Total Number of Responses: 2999

Student: 53

TCSS Parent/Guardian: 1855

TCSS Faculty/Staff Member: 700

TCSS Faculty/Staff Member & TCSS Parent/Guardian: 389

75% of respondents selected this option for start date of school year:

Employees start the first week of August, students start the second week of August, and both employees and students get out before Memorial Day. This option allows for holiday breaks similar to the current academic calendar.

Responses were very close on the questions for Fall Break for students and Fall Break for students AND staff.

55% said Fall Break is a great need.

64% of respondents chose a full week for Thanksgiving.

Results were similar on the questions about coordinating start and end of school and Spring Break with TCS and UA.

59% of respondents said coordinating these dates were either important or good if possible.

Here's how these options ranked:

1. Two weeks for Winter Break. (84% of respondents chose this as either their first or second choice.)
2. End school before Memorial Day.
3. Have a Fall Break.
4. Start school later in August.

On the spot for additional feedback, comments ranged widely, but some appeared frequently. These were: please keep the current calendar; small breaks throughout the year help to recharge; teachers would like more work days in their classroom, particularly at the beginning of the year.

Calendar Guidelines

By State Law, school systems must complete a minimum of 1,080 hours, or 64,800 minutes, of instructional time during an academic year. Previously, State law mandated 180 days, but did not allow any time for half days or other exceptions. Instructional time cannot include time for lunch, breaks, or transitions such as class changes.

At least seven faculty days are required, and faculty/staff must meet their contracted days, regardless of student days. Most nine-month employees are on a 187-day contract.

Schools may not be in session on Veterans Day or Memorial Day. Schools may be in session any other day of the year that is approved by the local Board of Education.

Considerations and Frequently Asked Questions

Why do we start school so early in August? Will we be out of school before Memorial Day?

We must meet the instructional minutes requirement, as described above. The later we start the school year, the fewer holidays that can be taken during the year, or school has to extend beyond Memorial Day.

Professional Development Days for Teachers

These are not a “day off” for teachers. Research from all aspects of educational study provides evidence that teachers need time to collaborate, plan, align lessons to standards, develop intervention plans for struggling students, and develop extensions for students who need additional challenge.

Fairly Consistent Time for Each Semester of School

Semesters should be fairly close in days and/or instructional time.

Holiday Decisions

All holiday decisions impact start and end dates for the academic year.

Coordination with the Tuscaloosa City Schools and The University of Alabama

In our community, many households have members who attend and/or are employed by TCSS, as well as either UA and/or TCS. Therefore, calendar coordination with TCS and UA is meaningful for many families, particularly for Spring Break, as well as other holiday breaks and school year start/end dates.