



Proposed school year changes

From Thea Cooper Saerys <thea.saerys@gmail.com>

Date Mon 12/30/2024 9:34 AM

To input, public <publicinput@hamden.org>

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Hello,

It is my opinion that starting the year later will not lead to the benefit claimed by Superintendent Highsmith. I do agree that extending the Winter break will be beneficial. Many families travel during that time. But delaying the start of the year and extending further into June will, I believe, backfire.

Thank you for your attention,

Thea Cooper Saerys



Proposed school calendar changes

From JackAndLaura PerkinsDavidson <lcpjhd@gmail.com>

Date Tue 12/31/2024 8:05 PM

To input, public <publicinput@hamden.org>

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To whom it may concern:

I'm writing about the proposed changes to the Hamden school calendar.

Waiting to start school until after Labor Day is a bad idea. Superintendent Highsmith is quoted as saying, "We all know ... there are any number of families that take that time off, and they don't send their kids to school until after Labor Day, anyway." However most families are not taking that time off, and with camps and childcare programs over, most are in need of childcare during the second to last week of August, much less the last week of August. Without clear data to really determine how many students aren't coming that week before Labor Day, we're just moving the days that families plan to have off to a different time of the year. I work in a school as well - there is always lower attendance the first few days, no matter when the first few days happen.

Several other changes do make sense: having winter break go through 1/6, not having an extra day in February, adding a few days to the end of the school year to offset the days added to winter break.

Thank you for your thoughtfulness on this matter!

Laura Davidson



Parent input on proposed calendar changes

From Melissa Dettmer Schild <madettmer@gmail.com>

Date Wed 1/1/2025 11:44 AM

To input, public <publicinput@hamden.org>

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Dear Hamden Board of Education,

I am a parent of two children in a Hamden elementary school and I am writing to oppose the major changes to the school calendar being proposed for the 2025-2026 year.

I work full time and have limited ability to take time off. I rely heavily on summer camps for child care. Extending summer break by an additional week would be a hardship for me and most working families. As it is, most summer camps in our area end by the middle of August, making child care already a challenge for working parents in the last week of summer break. Adding one more week to the end of summer - particularly when that is not being done anywhere else in the area - would mean another week without summer camps and child care. There would be no summer camps operating that week. It is erroneous to assume that every family would then adjust summer plans to take vacation days then as not all families have that flexibility or option.

The same challenge presents itself by extending the winter break to almost 2.5 weeks. I (and many parents) cannot take 2.5 weeks off of work during the holidays, and there are few options for childcare. While I understand the winter holidays fall awkwardly next year, this move would be very hard for working parents.

If you take such steps, then I would expect the Board to provide commensurate child care options such as an extra week of Hamden summer camp and camp options during winter recess. This proposed schedule would add roughly two weeks of extra break time in summer and winter when other child care options and camps are not traditionally available. You would be creating an exceptional hardship for working parents who cannot add days off from work simply because you've decided to make such drastic calendar changes. This proposal shows a great disregard for working parents/families.

I implore the school board to consider the value of consistency and predictability for the school calendar from year to year, and not make such dramatic changes for one year simply because of the cadence of holidays. We recently moved from a school district in Pennsylvania that had an almost identical schedule to the one Hamden currently has in the 2024-2025 year. We had no issues with absenteeism. I doubt making radical calendar changes is going to address the root cause of absenteeism in this district. If such changes are proposed to address absenteeism, I would ask that



Comment on 2025-26 school calendar

From Kelly Hebrank <kelly.hebrank@gmail.com>

Date Mon 1/6/2025 2:26 PM

To input, public <publicinput@hamden.org>

Cc jonathan.genn@gmail.com <jonathan.genn@gmail.com>

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Dear Hamden Board of
Education,

We write to you to speak against the proposal for the Hamden school calendar for the 2025-26 school year, namely starting the school year on Wednesday 9/3 and returning from winter break on Wednesday 1/7. We are homeowners in Hamden and have two children attending elementary school in Hamden. We are both teachers in New Haven Public Schools, and this proposal for Hamden's calendar is vastly different than the New Haven schedule. For working parents who can't take those additional days off, this poses a huge financial burden and difficulty finding childcare for those days. Currently, it is already extremely difficult to find childcare for the end of August because the vast majority of local camps have ended and college students have returned to their school year schedules. Extending the gap between the end of most camps and the beginning of school through the Wednesday after Labor Day poses a significant burden.



January 14 Board of Education meeting

From Cat Balco <catbalco@gmail.com>
Date Sun 1/12/2025 4:42 PM
To input, public <publicinput@hamden.org>

Warning: Unusual sender <catbalco@gmail.com>

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Submitted by:
Cat Balco
114 Ardmore St, Hamden, CT 06517

I am writing to express my strong opposition to the proposed school calendar change. My family is concerned about the significant new childcare costs that will result from these changes.

- like many Hamden residents, my husband is a teacher in a different district. If Hamden's school calendar significantly differs from other schools he will no longer be able to care for our children during breaks and we will have to find other coverage. Also, if Hamden's calendar is different from other districts, we will not be able to take advantage of vacation week camps that are often offered. - affordable camp options exist beginning in early June and ending in late August. As it is, the last week of August is a difficult time to find childcare coverage. If Hamden schools start after Labor Day, we will have an additional summer week without childcare options. If Hamden schools stay closed for two weeks over the winter holiday break we will have no childcare options as there are no camps during that time.

Sincerely,

Cat Balco



2025-26 school calender

From Shari Rahamim <shari.stelzer@gmail.com>

Date Sun 1/12/2025 7:33 PM

To input, public <publicinput@hamden.org>

External sender <shari.stelzer@gmail.com>

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Good evening,

I have 2 kids in Hamden public schools (alice peck and spring glen) and I would appreciate greatly if the 2025-26 school year starts the week before labor day as it has for the past several years. It is difficult if not impossible to find childcare in the form of camps for the last week of August. With the kids home all summer already mine are more than ready to return to school the week before labor day and we have no trouble getting our kids to school for day one. It is also nice that they can ease into the school year with a 3 day weekend. I'm concerned that if the school year starts so late that the kids will end up getting out very late in June with likely snow days. Again this means they may miss summer camp that we pay a lot of money for to attend the last few days of school. I feel it is unnecessary to plan to have such a late end to the school year when we know it will likely end even later with snow days.

As for winter break, I'm not opposed to a longer break as it allows for more flexibility with travel arrangements and avoids the kids going back for an awkwardly short week only to have additional random days off during the year.

I do not feel particularly strongly about whatever you decide for winter break, however I strongly encourage you to start the academic year BEFORE Labor day.

Best,
Shari Rahamim



School Calendar for 2025-26

From Emily Grosshuesch <grosshuesch@gmail.com>

Date Sun 1/12/2025 9:54 PM

To input, public <publicinput@hamden.org>

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Please have Hamden keep to as much to what the other school districts are doing in the area. There are so many complications that I can't even get my head around it. And I don't have small kids.

-kids are getting too late of a start for AP classes that have already started a month before in other states

-childcare complications- for one camp offerings are no longer available at the end of the month.

-etc

-what is the argument for doing this?

Emily K. Grosshuesch

"You may be disappointed if you fail, but you are doomed if you don't try." -Beverly Sills



14 January Board Meeting / Calendar Vote

From Alex Grennan <alexgrennan@gmail.com>

Date Mon 1/13/2025 8:43 AM

To input, public <publicinput@hamden.org>

Warning: Unusual sender <alexgrennan@gmail.com>

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Submitted by:

Alex Grennan

114 Ardmore St, Hamden, CT 06517

I am opposed to the proposed school calendar change. The proposed changes will trigger additional childcare costs and scheduling hardships that will negatively impact Hamden families. These hardships will be especially difficult for families with limited flexibility in their work schedules.

As much as possible, Hamden should mirror the schedules of other public school districts in the state so that Hamden families can coordinate childcare options. If students are not in school late August, childcare options become increasingly limited: most summer programs end the second-to-last week in August because school is starting for the bulk of kids in the state. Also, a proposed extended break in the Holiday season puts similar strain on families at a time where there are almost no private childcare options -- this would place additional strain on working Hamden families.

Please take these issues into consideration when you vote & have the schedule mirror other Connecticut districts as best as possible.

Thanks,

--Alex Grennan

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Alex Grennan

alexgrennan@gmail.com

203.804.3413