

Pittsburgh Public Schools Budget Public Hearing Testimonies Submitted Not Read
March 23, 2026

Kerry O'Connor

Good Evening Members of the Board,

Thank you for the work that went into drafting the 2026–27 school calendar. I recognize that balancing instructional time, professional development, transportation, and family needs is complex, especially considering the many people whose lives are built around this schedule, myself included.

I would like to offer a few student-centered suggestions, similar to those I shared at the PAC meeting, through email, and when I tried to volunteer to participate in the calendar committee.

First, please consider restoring the Monday after Thanksgiving so that a full long weekend occurs. This gives Pittsburgh Public Schools students and families meaningful time together and allows teachers and students to return refreshed, supporting both mental health and learning.

Second, I would also suggest moving the Friday, March 12th half-day professional development day to a week without a holiday. As currently scheduled, it creates a 3.5-day instructional week followed by a five-day week. Shifting it would ensure students experience at least four consistent instructional days, supporting focus and district goals for student achievement.

In maintaining a consistent rhythm in the school year by considering a long spring weekend around Easter, including Easter Monday. April currently has no days off in the draft calendar, yet academic demands increase significantly during that time. A well-placed break would allow students to reset before the final stretch of the school year.

Many nearby districts, including Mt. Lebanon School District and North Allegheny School District, maintain predictable holiday rhythms like in Fall (Thanksgiving) and Spring (Easter) that support families who often live and arrange childcare across district lines.

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PSSA testing next year does not begin until April 26, so adjusting the timing of spring break would still allow ample instructional time beforehand while helping students return rested and prepared.

As you look at the overall structure of the calendar, continuing to prioritize meaningful instructional weeks and avoiding extending the school year deeper into June also supports student learning, especially in buildings where late-year heat impacts many classrooms.

These small adjustments keep the calendar centered on what matters most—the learning, focus, and well-being of Pittsburgh Public Schools students. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Miss O’Connor

2026-2027 School Year

Assessment	Dates	Grades
English Language Arts	April 26 - 30, 2027	Grades 3–8
Mathematics, Science and Make-ups	May 3 - 7, 2027	Grades 3–8
Mathematics, Science, and Make-ups (Optional)	May 10 - 14, 2027	Grades 3–8
Early Reporting is not available in the 2026–2027 school year		

Firefly

Dates to be determined for 2026–2027 school year.