

FLINT COMMUNITY SCHOOLS

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Balanced Calendar Frequently Asked Questions

Q: What is a balanced calendar?

A: The balanced calendar is a fundamental change in the way Flint Community Schools approaches teaching and learning to best meet the needs of our students and families. First, even though students start earlier, the balanced calendar includes the same exact number of school days as the traditional calendar. There are just more breaks throughout the year. During each school session, students will be in class for roughly 45 days straight before taking a five day break. The shorter breaks are in place of a lengthy summer vacation and referred to as an intersession.

Q: Why do we have the balanced calendar?

A: We want to promote mastery learning to ensure students fully understand the material before moving through curriculum, giving all students a better chance to succeed. During each school session, students will be in class for roughly 45 days straight where they will study defined units. If they have not mastered the units, the intersession will be a time when they can get extra help to master the content so that they can move on to the next units with a more complete understanding.

Q: What are the dates of the 2019-20 school year?

A: The first day of school is August 7, 2019, and the last day of school is June 18, 2020. The entire 2019-20 calendar is available here at www.flintschools.org.

Q: Why was the decision made to switch to a balanced calendar?

A: The shift to a balanced calendar aligns with the District's ongoing efforts to improve academic achievement. The balanced calendar is also one of the Michigan Department of Education's strategies to become a "Top-10" education state in 10 years, as outlined in the 'Top 10 in 10 Years report.'

Q: Has the district implemented the balanced calendar before?

A: Many years ago, one school in Flint Community Schools operated a balanced calendar. Currently, the District operates a balanced calendar at Freeman Elementary School. Freeman Elementary School has seen some positive outcomes, we believe, in part, because of the balanced calendar framework. While we are pleased with such gains, we realize there is still more work to be done at Freeman and throughout the district. We are confident shifting to a balanced calendar is one of many steps in the right direction.

Q: Will everyone be able to participate in the intersessions? Or only select children?

A: At this time, there will be a cap on the number of students participating in intersessions for each building. Those who need remediation will be the first enrolled in intersessions, followed by those who are performing at a moderate level, but could benefit from additional support. Finally, considerations will be made for students whose parents are working and are unable to meet child care needs.

Q: How will teachers know if a student needs additional help during the breaks?

A: Flint Community Schools operates on a standards-based curriculum. Teachers have access to standards of learning for every grade level. Students who are not able to meet the standards at any given point in the curriculum will be identified as in need of additional support.

Q: What do intersessions involve?

A: Intersessions will include both instruction periods and YouthQuest activities, giving students access to both mental and physical activity during break periods. As we know, meeting the needs of the whole child means ensuring they have access to a variety of programs and activities, and intersessions will do just that.

Q: Will students be instructed by their regular teachers during intersession, or another individual?

A: Regular classroom teachers will have the opportunity to participate in intersessions if they so choose. Instruction during intersession will be led by a rolling schedule of FCS teachers. Because not all students will participate, not all teachers will be needed to staff every intersession.