



**To:** Dr. Terrell Yarbrough, Superintendent  
Harlem School District #122 Board Members

**From:** Dr. Michelle Erb, Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum and Instruction  
Dr. Jason Blume, Assistant Superintendent for Communications/Community Relations

**Date:** February 10, 2025

**Subject:** 2024-2025 District Calendar

Per Article V of the Collective Bargaining Agreement, “ Administration and Union will collaborate to propose the calendar. At least one (1) week before the Administration submits the proposed calendar to the Board for its approval, the proposed calendar shall be given to the Union members for their comments and suggestions. In the event of any proposed changes in the calendar, the Union members will be notified of the proposed changes by Administration.”

After presenting the proposed calendar A (see attached) to District staff for their feedback, we received feedback from 93 staff members as follows:

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| Take Veterans and Indigenous Peoples day and observe Monday/Tuesday of thanksgiving break so there is a full week.  |
| I do not like the idea of starting on a Tuesday. I think a Wednesday or Thursday creates an easier transition back into school schedule for the students , rather than starting a longer 4-5 day week right off the bat.                                |
| I like that there are two Institute days and a PD day to start the school year for staff.   |
| Looks ok to me.   |
| I don't see the need for 3 days of development / prep before school starts. Two like we have had has been enough or even just 2 days to prepare only since we have plenty of professional development within the school year.                           |
| Looks okay to me  |
| IT LOOKS GREAT  |
| start 2nd semester with the January SIP Day   |
| Looks fine to me  |
| looks fine  |
| I think it is fine.   |
| It is very helpful to me if our calendar aligns with Kinnickinnick school district and hopeful that we have the same week for Spring Break! Thank you! Otherwise, I will need to take time off to care for my children when our calendars do not match. |
| I don't think Spring break should be the last full week of March.   |

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| <p>For a district that continues to provide Trauma training and resources to us, having long weekends every month seems counter productive. We know those long weekends do NOT benefit our students who have and are experiencing trauma. Can we consolidate the number of long weekends when possible? Could March 20 be moved to April 7 and April 24 be moved to the end of the year, May 27 (or both March 20 and April 24 be moved to May 26 and 27? I recognize that this may be abused by staff with call ins and scheduled Dr appointments, but that becomes an Administrative issue to monitor and discipline as needed. Those people are most likely already calling in on SIP and institutes anyway. It would be better for students and families for children to be here 5 days in a row. We as professionals need to put the children first.</p> |
| <p>Technically the 2025-2026 school year starts August 14, 2025, correct?</p>   |
| <p>I would like to be done prior to Memorial Day if possible</p>  |
| <p>All looks good, however, I would really prefer that we have more student attendance days and fewer SIP days. They are not typically a good use of our time.</p>  |
| <p>I see that we are front loading institute and SIP days at the beginning of the school year. That is great for consistent student/teacher days. The day after our first conference is a full SIP day. Is there a reason as to why we have switched? Historically I am very busy at the first conference compared to the second and would prefer an institute day after the first conference of the school year. Thanks for all you do!</p>  |
| <p>We continue to have too many SIP and Institute Days. They create too many breaks for the students. I would prefer spring break be the last week of March.</p>  |
| <p>The 2 institute days to start the school year are unnecessary. I prefer to have the professional development day first and then only 1 Institute day to follow so we have time as classroom teachers to get prepared for students the following day. Also, having students start on a Tuesday makes for a VERY LONG first week of school for students and teachers alike. Another point, if we are in negotiations for our certified contract, are they discussing how many SIP and Institute Days we have next year because a lot of teacher feedback is that we have too many of those days in our district calendar, compared to all the local districts who only have a few days. It doesn't make sense Harlem has 9 teacher works days (SIP and Institute Combined).</p>  |
| <p>Overall, I like it. I remember that one thing that may be addressed with the new contract is eliminating the 'temporary' additional SIP day. I'm wondering how that could impact this calendar?</p>  |
| <p>Looks good to me 👍</p>   |
| <p>August 14 is too early to start. SIP &amp; 1 - TI Days on August 18 &amp; 19. Students go until May 29</p>   |
| <p>Limit the amount of SIP and Institute Days</p>   |
| <p>spring break is over Easter which I would prefer it to not to be. I would also appreciate it if it aligned with other districts, my kids are in a different district than Harlem, there spring break is scheduled for March 23-27. Thank you!</p>  |
| <p>Looks good to me.</p>  |
| <p>I would like to see a reduced number of SIP days and have students in attendance instead. Many of our students are two or more grade levels below grade level. The more students are in school, the more opportunity they have to learn.</p> <p>I also think that a three day first week of school is better than a four day week. Students are too tired when they have a long first week back.</p>   |
| <p>Can President's Day be a built in Emergency Make-up day if we have a snow day prior to that day?</p>   |
| <p>Move Spring break so that it's earlier in March. At the high school, it's safe to assume that the ACT will be April 8th, or sometime during that first full week in April. It's April 9th this year, for example. Having an entire week off, plus the Monday after Easter, so close to that exam could potentially hurt students' performance. Since we can't change the date of Easter and will have off April 3rd and 6th regardless, we should move Spring Break to the week of March 16th or 23rd so that it's less time off RIGHT before state testing. (Also--I</p>  |

admit this is 100% selfish, BUT--for those of us who travel to visit family during Spring Break, the last week of March is the most expensive time to fly.)

Make January 5th a teacher work day (SIP, institute, PD day, whatever it needs to be labeled). Most nearby districts have a staff work day on the day they return from Winter Break. It doesn't make sense for us not to have one as well. Since our semester ends BEFORE break, having a partial or full day to plan, prep, set up seating charts, make copies, etc., before the Spring semester begins would be very helpful. It would also benefit teachers' mental health!!

The first parent conferences date is too early in the semester; we don't have enough data or info on students yet. I suggest moving it to October 30th (conferences) & 31st (SIP). Also, even though it's not a legal holiday, parents and student would appreciate having Halloween off.

Get rid of the SIP day on April 24th--or move it to January 5th. Another option is to designate that date as an emergency makeup day. For example, if we have a snow day, students should attend on April 24th to make it up. If we don't have a snow day, it remains a SIP day.

I doubt this would work, since the first semester has fewer days than the second, BUT can the teacher work days be Monday-Wednesday, with students starting on Thursday, August 21st?

I love the extra Teacher Insitute Day in the beginning of the year. I think teachers will appreciate that time to work and prepare for the year instead of using their own time.

I know that we have to have a certain number of SIP days, but it is beginning to feel like a lot, where we are often repeating PD or trying to figure out what to present. In a way, it feels like once you are done with one, you are planning the next. Is there a way to do two PD days in the beginning of the year? We have so much to present and breaking it up into two morning sessions, with work time (collaboration, lesson planning, applying what was learned in a PD type way) in the afternoon will be much more bearable and I think more teachers will soak in the information than shut down. I would also suggest having an Institute day or PD day after winter break before kids come back. Again, teachers are expected to do "work" on their break and it is nice to give us time to prepare for kids returning. I would suggest taking the Insitute day from February (as you did in October) or make that a PD day when some work time. Each year there are more requirements, or more things to learn, yet less time to complete it or nothing adjusted in the schdule (not anyone's fault just kind of how education goes) so I think it would be nice to make some adjustments where we can, to support some of the changes.

The January SIP day should be January 5. This would allow time to offer trainings for any new curriculums/initiatives, prepare for the upcoming quarter/semester with teams & PLCs so they do not have to work on breaks/outside contract time, and also if there are any travel issues from vacations on break, this would ensure teachers are back for student attendance and would alleviate subbing issues and coverage. If we have a day before the fall semester to prepare and meet for the upcoming semester, it could also work to help teachers in the spring as well.

Are there solutions to end the school year before Memorial Day?

2 TI's and 1 PD day at the start of the year is unnecessary, especially the Friday going 8-3:30. I would rather see a TI Day at the beginning of 2nd semester to prepare. Why start us on a Thursday? I would like to see us start on Monday/Tuesday, so maybe we could be done before Memorial Day. This would also give us more days during Semester 1 with the students. Also, the SIP day after a long day of PT conferences basically sucks. Most of us barely can focus for the 8-1 day let alone for 8-3:30. (unless this is one of our 8-1 SIP days, I would be ok with that)

Why is there a Teacher Institute on August 18? First semester is already shorter than second semester, an extra day here and there really makes a difference! The first day back (Aug. 14) has typically been a School Improvement Day, with the Institute Day following. It is a long first day back, but it is also nice to have a shorter work day the second day....especially on a Friday.

Oct. 10 is the day after parent conferences. Usually that is an Institute Day as well....Parent Conferences are stressful and emotionally exhausting. The shorter work day following Parent Conferences is much appreciated...so can Oct. 10 be the Institute from Aug. 18?

There are three school improvement days in second semester and only one in first semester. What is the rationale for that? If school improvement days help the school, shouldn't we have 2 first semester? Also, could the first day back after winter break be a school improvement day? As secondary teachers, many of us have new classes, new students, and even a new schedule! It takes time to prep, and I spend time over winter break getting ready for those new classes! It would be amazing to have a school improvement day to help get ready for new classes, and discuss self-care, or emotional exhaustion. Watch TikTok...so many districts do this to help teachers be their best selves. We give so much to our classes, our students, our school. That really needs to be acknowledged, and accepted. It's not about not working.....but about appreciation for the incredibly stressful jobs we spend every day making look easy.

Can we swap the institute day with the SIP day after conferences? It always seems like we need additional time before school starts to get things ready, meet as a team, etc. and after working late for conferences people are going to be ready to go the following day. Also wondering if it would be easier for families to have the March SIP day going in to spring break?

I like the start date of 8/19 as it will ensure a almost full first week of school. I also like having the fall parent-teacher conferences in October rather than September as it gives more time to get to know the students/areas of concern, etc.

Looks okay to me

I don't like spring break being so late

This calendar works very well for the high school, especially with our ideal Homecoming week being the week of the 9/22.  
Also, Indigenous is misspelled on the draft.

3 days at the beginning of the school year to prepare seem might be too much. If we can pull one of those and move it to Thanksgiving week, we could then offer November 24 as conferences, November 25 as an institute day and have the rest of the week off for Thanksgiving.

Would there be an option to have a "fall break" for November 24-28 for Thanksgiving like Rockford does?

Rockford is starting only 2 days before our students and their calendar now has their school year ending before Memorial Day.

At the secondary level, we do NOT need three days before the school year. We could do with one day. Start us back on Monday the 17th, give us an Institute, make that night back to school night, and leave Tuesday the 18th as the first student attendance day. Distribute those SIP days throughout the semester. We already have a hard enough time keeping teachers in the building on those pre-semester professional development days, so why would we add another?

I would prefer to go into June and start the week of August 18th. Starting August 14th is very early in August.

I would like to see us have a PD or Institute Day at the beginning of Semester 2. I think it would be nice for faculty and staff to have a day in the building before the kids come back. Since there are 3 days proposed at the beginning of the year, one could be moved to semester 2.

1. Switch either of the beginning of the year institute days with the PD day so we have 8-1 on the Friday instead of an 8-3:30. It would just be a nice gesture.
2. Also to the above, most schools will not choose to have their back to school night on Friday which means back to school nights will be scheduled on the Thursday or Monday which are 8-1 workdays so teachers will work 8-1 and then have to come back for a back to school night; it is easier to schedule back to school nights on a day when teachers are already in the building until 3:30
3. If you can't switch the order, then move all three to the following M/T/W.

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| <p>4. Go back to having an institute day after fall parent conferences</p> <p>5. Also, why the lack of transparency with the 3 days at the beginning of the school year and the SIP day after fall conferences? I am assuming many teachers are giving feedback about this; if you had just been transparent up front about the reasoning/need for the days, you would have a lot less questions/feedback about them</p>  |
| <p>I like the newly proposed District calendar.</p>   |
| <p>Don't agree with October 10 SIP day because we have the book fair at the same time in our gym, can you change it to another date</p>   |
| <p>I would like to know more about why there are 3 staff days at the beginning of the year and not the normal two that we have had previously. Additionally, is it possible to move one of those to September then to offer some sort of breakup of the month and keep the original two days to start the year? Possibly the 19th?</p>  |
| <p>Looks good!</p>  |
| <p>Like the Christmas break and how it falls;</p>   |
| <p>I'd rather see a start date for students on a Thursday (8/21) with the three teacher days being the Monday, Tuesday, and Wednesday. Having to return for two days before the weekend, makes it feel like the summer is shortened by not having that weekend included in the summer break.</p>  |
| <p>Looks good</p>   |
| <p>This looks very good.</p>  |
| <p>I like the calendar</p>  |
| <p>Having a sip day after conferences is too much.</p>  |
| <p>I think it looks good.</p>   |
| <p>I personally like the calendar for the 2025-2026 school year and have no changes to recommend. Thank you.</p>  |
| <p>Prefer first work day to be the 18th instead of the week before.</p> <p>I don't feel that we need two institutes and PD day prior to school start. Math does not have new information to present. We should be able to cover the problem types and help teachers get started with that process in a 60 minute session.</p> <p>Too many SIP/institute in the Spring. I know we need the time for curriculum reviews/etc, but feel we are spending too much time prepping and preparing for presentations which is really cutting into time in the classrooms. Struggling to find new things to present.</p> |
| <p>I need some clarification on the three in service days at the beginning of the year. What is the "professional development" day?</p> <p>Also, please consider eliminating of the the SIP or Institute days. If the powers that be had to sit through them, they would realize that they are punishment for teachers. I'd much rather teach students and start later in the summer.</p> <p>Thank you.</p>   |
| <p>Start of the year you have Teachers Institute, Professional Development, and Teachers Institute again. Instead of having two institute days why not a school improvement day instead. . Then after the first parent teacher conferences have Teacher Institute like it used to be. Spring Break would be nice to have the last full week of March and then Good Friday off, instead of it all in one week. That way they are about the same as usual.</p>  |
| <p>I like the fact that there fall conferences are later (October). However, is there anyway to switch to have Teacher Institutes after Parent teacher conferences instead of SIP days. That would be my recommendation.</p>  |

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| Looks good  |
| Where is the other choice?  |
| Can spring break be the week of March 23-27 to align with other local districts. Why do we have two institute days and a PD day before the start of school? Can the PD day be Monday instead of Friday? Many schools will be doing meet the teacher nights on Monday. Oct SIP day after a fall conference day will be really hard on Elementary teachers. It needs to be an 8:00-1:00 day.  |
| Make the Monday after Super Bowl the February SIP day   |
| I think the first set of conferences should be moved back one week to Oct. 2 and not tied to Columbus Day weekend. That is one of the weekends that we can take an extra day before per our contract and that will not be possible if we have a SIP on Friday. Also, I think the day after conferences should be an institute instead of a full SIP day. Elementary conferences are draining and having a full day after is exhausting.   |
| I have a few questions about the calendar.<br>1. What is the purpose of the 2 institute days plus the PD day before school? That seems like a lot of information to get thrown at us before school starts when we might need that time to prepare our classrooms. It just seems like it would be overwhelming when the start of the year is already pretty overwhelming.<br>2. What is the purpose of the SIP day after fall conferences? In the past, this day has been an institute day, which is much easier after a long day of conferences. Conferences and SIP days are long and draining and I can't imagine them being back to back.<br>The rest of the dates seem fine to me. I am just concerned about those two items. Thank you for taking the time to hear me out. |
| Looks good.   |

**RECOMMENDATIONS:** All suggestions were read and considered. Based on the feedback, I am asking for Board approval on the calendar presented (see attached - Proposed Calendar B). The key dates are as follows:

**Teacher Institute Days:** August 14, August 18, February 13, May 28

**Professional Development Day:** August 15

**School Improvement Days:** October 10, January 5, March 20, April 24

**Winter Break:** December 22 - January 2

**Spring Break:** March 30 - April 6

**First Day of Student Attendance:** August 19

**Last Day of Student Attendance:** May 27

I appreciate working with the Union leadership throughout this process and obtaining feedback from our staff.